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PROGRAMME EVALUATION IN UNCTAD

Report by the Secretary-General of UNCTAD

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INTRODUCTION AND SUMMARY

1. The present report contains in Chapter I, Section A, a review of the development of the evaluation process in UNCTAD, covering the evaluation of both substantive programmes (management-oriented evaluation) and technical co-operation activities, since the evaluation system was established in 1985. Chapter I, Section B, includes an assessment of the process, with reference to both aspects of the process as referred to above. It also discusses issues relating to the measurement of results as an essential aspect of evaluation and provides a summary of the lessons learned from both the management-oriented evaluations and the evaluation of technical co-operation activities. Such lessons learned constitute another essential aspect of evaluation.

2. In Chapter II, the report looks at future activities and orientations. It discusses the strengthening of the evaluation process and its role in relation to policy-oriented evaluation at the intergovernmental level in terms, for example, of the review of work programmes and their priorities by the Trade and Development Board. It also deals with the balance of internal and external evaluation, arguing that, while management-oriented evaluation has its own merits and needs to be strengthened, some external evaluation may also be undertaken as a complement to it. However, the latter is costly and will need to be applied selectively. Other issues discussed include the establishment of an evaluation database in order to facilitate the recall of lessons learned from evaluations; and the improvement of the instruments of evaluation, including the methods of dissemination and feedback and the establishment of co-operative arrangements with other evaluation units for the sharing of data and experiences and the improvement of evaluation methodologies.

3. A summary of the results of two evaluations of technical co-operation programmes, in the areas of maritime transport and trade preferences, is provided in annexes I and II.

Chapter I

REVIEW OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS IN UNCTAD

A. Development of the process and related activities

4. A system for the evaluation of substantive programmes of UNCTAD was established in 1985. For UNCTAD it was a pioneering exercise. To a large extent, it was also true for the United Nations systems as a whole, since there had been limited experience in this field throughout the system.

5. As originally conceived, the system of programme evaluation was to comprise two mutually-reinforcing processes. One would consist of management-oriented evaluation by the secretariat, combining self-evaluation by programme managers, as mandated by the Programme Planning Rules, and independent assessment by the Programme Co-ordination and Evaluation Unit (PCEU). The evaluation responsibilities of PCEU, when it was established in 1985, were to oversee and co-ordinate the programme evaluation activities, acting as a central focal point for this purpose. It also had responsibilities for organizing and undertaking any cross-sectoral or in-depth evaluations and for supporting any intergovernmental policy-oriented evaluation. The latter was to constitute the second aspect of the programme evaluation system.

6. Since the establishment of the programme evaluation system, 22 of the 26 substantive subprogrammes of UNCTAD have been subjected to management-oriented evaluation. A description of the methodology for such evaluation was included in an earlier report to the Board, as was a description of the relationship of evaluation to the other parts of the integrated management process, as was envisaged by the Programme Planning Rules (see TD/B/1110 and TD/B/1145). Basically, the evaluation is based on an assessment of the effectiveness of implementation (i.e. the quantitative results achieved in relation to the planned outputs) and of the effectiveness of outcome (i.e. the relevance, effectiveness and impact of the results achieved, and the extent to which the objectives have been attained), as well as of the factors affecting the results achieved and the shortcomings encountered. As provided in the procedures, the results of such evaluations were discussed, in a number of cases, by the senior management and the programme managers concerned with a view to drawing lessons therefrom and taking follow-up action in order

to give effect to the findings and recommendations. Summaries of the results of the 22 management-oriented evaluations, conducted during the period 1986-1988, were provided to the Board (see TD/B/1110, TD/B/1145 and TD/B/1184), as was a survey of the implementation of the major findings and recommendations arising from such evaluations (see TD/B/1225).

7. Although policy-oriented evaluation at the intergovernmental level has not been implemented in a formal sense, the review of work programmes by the main Committees constituted a form of such evaluation. The decisions taken by the Cartagena Conference, and subsequently by the Board in relation to its executive sessions, will reinforce this process. How the evaluation system can contribute to this process is discussed below (see paras. 32-33).

8. Beginning in 1988, the responsibilities of the PCEU were extended to cover the evaluation of technical co-operation activities of UNCTAD. This was a logical development and served to emphasize the link, and the development of greater integration, between the normative and the operational activities of the organization. The backstopping responsibility of the PCEU includes, inter alia, reviewing and drafting of the terms of reference of evaluation missions, participation in or undertaking the process of the selection of evaluators, the organisation of evaluation missions, and in the briefing and debriefing evaluators, as well as commenting on draft and final evaluation reports. The PCEU is also responsible for ensuring follow-up to the results of evaluation missions that fall within UNCTAD's competence, including the drawing of lessons learned for future project design and implementation. In addition to backstopping the evaluation of a number of technical co-operation projects, the PCEU has also participated in a number of evaluation missions relating to technical cooperation activities.

9. The PCEU has also, at the request of the intergovernmental bodies concerned, conducted an in-depth evaluation of technical co-operation activities in two areas: maritime and multimodal transport (see TD/B/C.4/331 and Add.1) and the GSP and related trade law (see TD/B/C.5/136). Summaries of the conclusions and recommendations of these two studies are given in the Annex.

10. As part of its related responsibilities, the PCEU has also participated in the reviews of policy orientations and work programmes in the context of the planning and monitoring of the preparation, and of the assessment of the

results, of major intergovernmental meetings. To the extent that they contribute to the same aims as the process of management-oriented evaluation in terms of assessing the relevance, usefulness and effectiveness of work programmes, such reviews complement the evaluation process. In terms of its programme planning responsibilties, the PCEU has also helped to ensure that relevant evaluation results are integrated into programme planning and budgeting, as envisaged by the Programme Planning Rules.

11. A part of its evaluation activities, the PCEU has also conducted a survey on the use of consultants, and another on the development of UNCTAD's computerized systems, including information systems, software packages and data bases. Some of the recommendations of the former have been implemented. The findings and recommendations of the latter were being reviewed at the time of writing. They concerned inter alia co-ordination, funding, including contributions from users and the utilization of resources; the updating and dissemination of high quality information; and the consolidation of systems within a coherent framework for the overall management and development of the computerized systems.

B. An assessment of the process

1. Management-oriented evaluation

12. At the intergovernmental level, the procedure of reporting to Governments summaries of the results of the evaluation studies, and of the steps taken to implement their findings and recommendations, has been welcomed by Governments and has also contributed to creating general confidence in the process. Recognition of its usefulness and acceptability was reflected particularly in the statements made by all groups of Governments to the Working Party on the Medium-term-plan and Programme Budget at its 19th session (see TD/B/1250).

13. At the system-wide level, the evaluation process and experience have had a certain impact. The process has been praised by United Nations Headquarters as "perhaps the best established in the United Nations" (see A/44/233, para. 22). Its procedure of reporting to Governments has been complimented by the JIU (see JIU/REP/88/1, para. 136(f)) and examples of the results of its studies have been provided in illustrative examples of how the presentation and content of programme performance reporting can be enriched by additional information on the results achieved in relation to the objectives (see A/44/233, Annex IV). The PCEU has participated at the invitation of the

organizers in "brainstorming" and training events on evaluation organized by the Central Evaluation Unit of the United Nations, and an evaluation symposium organized by UNESCO. The PCEU has shared evaluation methodological material and studies with other organizations, including inter alia UNRWA, UNIDO ESCAP and ILO. The PCEU has also participated actively in the work of inter-agency groups on evaluation, particularly the Inter-Agency Working Group chaired by UNDP.

14. At the secretariat level, without minimizing the serious and important efforts made by individual programmes to comply with the requirements of the process, stronger efforts are required to utilize fully self-evaluation as a principle of management and as a management tool. This need is not peculiar to UNCTAD, as has been emphasized in the report submitted to CPC at its thirty-second session, and by CPC itself. A clear framework to relate evaluation to other aspects of the management process, including the adaptation of programmes to new requirements and circumstances or the setting of priorities, would be helpful in this regard. This being said, the evaluations within the UNCTAD secretariat have served a particular purpose as exercises in transparency concerning the results achieved and shortfalls registered in relation to the planned outputs and the objectives. They have also enabled useful lessons to be learned (see para. 26). These lessons indeed anticipated some of the changes that were made by UNCTAD VIII.

15. The case for strengthening the evaluation process also rests on the fact that, in terms of the Programme Planning Rules, intergovernmental mandates need to be translated into objectives in the Medium-term Plan, as well as courses of action to be adopted by the secretariat in order to contribute to the achievement of the objectives. Evaluation is necessary in order to assess the relevance and effectiveness of the courses of action adopted and the results obtained in relation to the objectives so as to identify shortcomings and the reasons therefor. It can provide useful lessons learned for good management, and, as conceived by the evaluation system established in UNCTAD, it can complement policy-oriented evaluation at the intergovernmental level.

2. Evaluation of technical co-operation activities

16. As regards UNDP-supported projects UNCTAD follows the UNDP procedures for project monitoring and evaluation (see TD/B/1225 for a summary of such procedures). These involve regular progress reports and tripartite reviews and, depending on the particular project, in depth evaluations. These procedures are also applied mutatis mutandis to bilaterally-funded projects. PCEU, in co-operation with the JTCU and the substantive programme or programmes concerned, provides its own inputs and performs an overview and supporting role. Its involvement in the evaluation tasks mentioned above (see para 8. above) varies, depending on the particular project and the resources availability of the PCEU.

17. The evaluation reports are issued under the responsibility of the assessors for the use of all the parties concerned. The impact of PCEU's contribution has varied from one evaluation to another. In one particular case it played a key role in contributing to the finalization of the evaluation report. In a few other cases, however, its role has been essentially of a supportive nature, with a view to enhancing the quality of the evaluation, bearing in mind both the concerns of UNDP and UNCTAD.

18. The PCEU has also participated in two evaluation missions, one relating to debt management in Haiti in August 1990, and the other relating to the Caribbean TRAINMAR project in September 1991. The results of these two evaluation missions have been well received and have led to follow-up action. In the case of the latter, the findings and recommendations were considered by the Steering Committee of the project which decided that a number of them should be implemented.

19. As regards the in-depth evaluation of the technical co-operation programme in the field of maritime and multimodal transport, the Committee on Shipping held in June 1990 took note with appreciation of the report and of its contents and the Intergovernmental Group of Experts on Ports held in September 1990 reacted positively to the recommendations regarding the consolidation and further development of various training courses. The report on the in-depth evaluation of the GSP and related trade laws was considered by the Special Committee on Preferences
at its eighteenth session held in May 1991, which asked that its recommendations be taken into account in the further development of the technical co-operation programme in this area.

3. The measurement of results

20. An important purpose of evaluation is the assessment and measurement of results in relation to the objectives and the costs. There is thus a qualitative aspect concerning the relevance, quality, usefulness and effectiveness of the results achieved, as well as a quantitative aspect concerning the volume of the results achieved, for example the number of policy-makers trained, the number of studies prepared, etc. By relating the results, both qualitatively and quantitatively, to the objectives and the costs, one can take a measure of the "cost-effectiveness" of the programme or project.

21. However, such assessment and measurement continue to pose certain difficulties. In the case of research, for example, the number of studies completed - the quantitative aspect - is easy enough to determine. But questions arise about the qualitative dimension. How does one evaluate a good idea or a set of policy proposals? How can their impact on policy analysis or formulations be assessed? Several assessments of quality are provided by the statements made at intergovernmental meetings, but some of them are too general to be of practical use. Feedback concerning the impact of UNCTAD's research studies on changes in legislative and policy frameworks, for example, may be obtained from the field through related technical co-operation activities. It may also be obtained through evaluation missions to capitals, to the extent that resources permit.

22. An additional source of information is given in the replies collected by the UNCTAD readership survey. On the whole, the ratings and the information concerning end uses given in the replies received are very useful and encouraging. But the small number of the replies received, the sources (mainly research institutions, universities, other NGOs and private individuals and companies) and the risk of a biased sample (in the case of solicited replies through special mailings) will need to be taken into account in drawing conclusions concerning the assessment of quality. Other indicators may be the citations, reviews or references made in economic, trade or social science journals, world newspapers, wire services or broadcasts. Quantitative data concerning the number of citations of an UNCTAD report and qualitative data concerning related reviews can be obtained from the United Nations

Bibliographic Information System (UNBIS), the Index of Economic Literature of DIALOG Information Service and the Social Science Citation Index. The press surveys prepared by the UNCTAD secretariat of the Trade and Development Report provide another source of reference for the assessment of impact regarding this particular publication.

23. Training activities have been mentioned as examples of successful evaluations. The number of trainees can be established in relation to the target figure, and a measure of success can be made. The cost per trainee can be calculated without much difficulty and, for the same quality, if the cost of trainee falls over time, because local capacity has been developed and used, the training programme can be said to be cost-effective. If the local capacity is self-sustaining, a positive conclusion may also be drawn concerning the sustainability of the programme. The willingness to bear the cost of training, including travel, accommdation and participation fees, can provide another indicator of the quality and usefulness of a training programme. However, there is the larger question of the impact of training on performance. A database of trainees can be established for the purpose of monitoring post-training performance, as has been recommended for the Caribbean TRAINMAR project. With appropriate follow-up action in due course, this procedure should facilitate an appropriate assessment of the impact of training on career development and performance.

24. Thus the measurement of results, despite the difficulties that may be encountered, should continue to be an important component of any evaluation of the worth of a programme or project. Such measurement can also help to establish the relative value of programmes or projects and thus help the process of priority setting and of redeploying resources from less effective to more effective programmes or projects.

4. Learning from experience

25. Another important purpose of evaluation is to draw useful lessons from the experience of past activities in order to provide a basis for better decision-making or for improved design and implementation of future programmes or projects. This is an important aspect of the evaluation process,

independently of the measurement of the results achieved. Together with the latter, the lessons learned would provide management with an improved basis for its decisions and for the design and implementation of its future activities. Feedback from the lessons learned, and from the measurement of results achieved, can also assist Governments in their reviews of their work programmes or policy-oriented evaluations.

(a) Management-oriented evaluations

26. Some of the major lessons learned and related recommendations from the management-oriented evaluations conducted thus far are indicated below:

Quality and usefulness of the secretariat's work. Areas for improvement indicated by the lessons learned include:

- Strengthening of the secretariat's research capacity and specialized expertize and databases, inluding procedures to obtain adequate data from national sources;
- Strengthening the practical value and usefulness as well as the country focus of its work;
- Improving the sharing of information within the secretariat, including the sharing of analyses of country policies and experiences derived from research and operational activities;
- Strengthening interactions with governments and other interested parties (NGOs, the private sector, etc.) in order to benefit from their inputs into the secretariat's work;
- Improving the substantive planning of intergovernmental meetings.

Dissemination and feedback. Particular attention ahould be given to:

- Improvement of feedback procedures in order to secure a fuller assessment by users of the quality and usefulness of the secretariat's outputs;
- Improvement of dissemination procedures to targeted groups and operational focal points in order to achieve the maximum impact.

Programme management. The recommended measures arising from the lessons learned include:

- Improvement of programme management through inter alia better use of the instruments of management as envisaged in the Programme Planning Rules;

- Subject to the concurrence of relevant intergovernmental bodies, diminishing or discontinuing of certain activities in order to create additional resources for other activities;
- Improving the demarcation of responsibilities and of arrangements for collaborative work;
- Selection of particular subprogrammes for external evaluation.

Integration of research and operational activities. The lessons learned indicated a need for:

- Achieving increased cross-fertilization between research and operational activities so as to make them more mutually reinforcing.

(b) Evaluation of technical co-operation activities

27. Internal and external evaluation studies of UNCTAD technical co-operation projects have reported positively on many aspects of that co-operation; at the same time, the studies have provided useful lessons learned and recommended measures that would further improve the effectiveness of on-going or new projects. These lessons learned and related recommendations are summarised below.

28. Design and implementation of projects. The design of projects could be improved by a more rigorous analysis of the relevant and specific technical co-operation requirements of individual and groups of developing countries in accordance with their national development strategies. Project effectiveness would benefit from a careful review, jointly with the host country, of the commitment of the beneficiary institution in terms of staff and resources at different stages of the project cycle. In line with UNCTAD's approach to technical co-operation, the design of projects should include to an increasing extent a thorough analysis of how the proposed project would incorporate UNCTAD's specific technical contribution and how the Organisation would draw on the results of the project for its regular work.

29. The evaluation studies also point to the need to ensure the timely delivery of project inputs and activities within realistically defined time frames for project implementation, for which action is required by all parties to the project. Some studies have also mentioned the need to select international experts with particular knowledge of the economic and social

situation and culture of the country or region. The need for project performance indicators as part of good project design and implementation has also been highlighted: these indicators may include, depending on the project, inter alia, the proportion of project objectives achieved; the number of people trained or institutions established; the quality of a training course (as indicated by the participants evaluations, number of deliveries and adaptations, user fees charged, etc.); and degree of self-financing, national support and prospects for self-sustainability.

30. Contribution to the building of national capacities. The activities in this important area - skills, information and institution building - will need to be improved through:

- better identification of local needs and national focal points and fuller utilisation of local expertise (in universities, research institutes, national administrations, etc.) with a view to improving interactions among the local parties concerned, enhancing sustainability of project acitivities and facilitating TCDC;
- more systematic activities in the area of training or skills formation, paying particular attention to the selection of candidates, the strengthening of local training capacity and the updating/adaptation of training material in response to local needs;
- improved dissemination of UNCTAD information systems and software packages, through the designation of an efficient, well-trained and motivated national focal point; locally-sourced hardware with an adequate maintenance contract; and appropriate arrangements, including good communication facilities with UNCTAD and elsewhere for the updating of data;
- in the case of one particular project, the strengthening of national capacities for analyses of trade policy reform and for international trade negotiations with a view to ensuring that developing countries are enabled to exploit new commercial opportunities and to participate fully in multilateral and regional trade negotiations.

31. Post-project follow-up. Such follow-up is important in order to assess the impact of project activities and to help ensure their sustainability. Measures for this purpose include the establishment of a database of trainees and of procedures (e.g. post-training survey) to monitor the impact of training on career development and operational performance; the monitoring of

the cost of training over time as local training capacity is developed and used; and the monitoring of the implementation of the results of technical co-opeation projects after their completion.

32. It should be noted that many of the lessons learned and the related recommendations are equally applicable to other United Nations organizations undertaking technical co-operation, and require for their application consultations with the other parties in the tripartite system of technical co-operation. UNCTAD pursues such issues in the UNDP-convened Inter-Agency Working Group on Evaluation. In any event, and to the extent that resources permit, specific recommendations are put into effect.

Chapter II

FUTURE ACTIVITIES AND ORIENTATIONS

A. Strengthening the evaluation process

33. The system of evaluation in UNCTAD will need to adapt itself to the new context in which UNCTAD, as part of the United Nations, finds itself, as well as to the particular requirements arising from the results of UNCTAD VIII. In this respect, the process will have to become more innovative and self-critical. It will also have to become more action-oriented and contribute to the fullest extent possible to the decision-making process relating to future programme orientations and priorities. The procedure of reporting to Governments has served to promote transparency and to provide accountability concerning the implementation and effectiveness of programmes, as well as to build up political confidence in the evaluation process. In this regard, CPC, at the first part of its thirty-second session held in May 1992, concluded that findings from self-evaluations should be reported by programme managers to their respective governing bodies and that such reports should be placed on the agendas of the specialized governing bodies for discussion.

34. The system should also contribute to policy-oriented evaluations, i.e. the reviews of work programmes to be undertaken by the Board midway between Conferences, as envisaged by UNCTAD VIII.

35. In order to maintain the credibility of the evaluation process, organizational arrangements are being made to enable the evaluation unit to report directly to senior management, independently of line management. While being accountable to senior management, and while the work will continue to involve discussions with the officials responsible for the activities under evaluation, its findings will not require the concurrence of those officials. Subject to the authority of the Secretary-General of UNCTAD, the evaluation unit will be responsible for choosing evaluators, evaluation topics and the terms of reference for studies. The evaluation process itself will be subject to independent scrutiny. The functions of the evaluation unit will include the assessment of self-evaluation studies undertaken by line or programme managers. The output of the evaluation unit will be kept under review.

Arrangements are also under way to permit the easy recall of lessons learned from past evaluations and for incorporating past lessons in future activities. In these ways, the internal evaluation system can contribute effectively to the assessment of the worth and effectiveness of programmes and projects, and to their adaptation to new circumstances and requirements.

B. Balance of internal and external evaluation

36. Self-evaluation has served its value but needs to be strengthened. It remains a legislatively mandated function and, if well implemented, can lead to improved decision-making and programme performance, as well as improved programme planning, including the specification of programme objectives, the problems addressed and the strategy or course of action of the secretariat, as well as the linkages among them.

37. A paper prepared by the Royal Norwegian Ministry of Development Co-operation for a meeting of the DAC/OECD Expert Group on Aid Evaluation in 1990 concluded that self-evaluation should be viewed as a sound principle of management and that it should be carried out on a routine basis. It recognized that the quality and extent of self-evaluation within the agencies are critical determinants of efficient and purposeful multilateral assistance and proposed that DAC members give further impetus to the strengthening of self-evaluation capacity and the improvement of the quality of self-evaluation in the agencies. Although self-evaluation was not defined in the paper, two types of self-evaluations may be distinguished: evaluation by programme managers themselves, supported and scrutinized by an independent evaluation unit; and evaluation conducted by the evaluation unit itself.

38. As indicated earlier, UNCTAD's experience covers both types of evaluation. Under the right conditions, such evaluations can serve a useful purpose in improving the performance and effectiveness of programmes and projects and creating greater transparency, both internally and externally, concerning the results achieved in relation to the objectives and costs, as well as lessons learned which can enhance the decision-making process and provide useful guidance for the future. Further, such evaluations, to the extent that they meet certain requirements, have the advantage of being much less costly than external evaluations conducted by outside consultants. Such evaluations can also complement other evaluations, including those conducted by donor governments or funding agencies.

39. However, external inputs would need to be sought as a complement to the internal evaluation process. Such inputs are already used in in-depth evaluation of technical co-operation activities. They should also be applied to the evaluation of substantive programmes. However, such inputs are costly (in the case of the International Trade Centre UNCTAD/GATT, the cost is of the order of US$ 70,000 for the evaluation of a subprogramme) and should therefore be applied on a selective basis.

40. The recent practice of certain donors -- for example, the Nordic countries under the Nordic United Nations project -- to make available their evaluation reports to the United Nations bodies is to be welcomed. Such reports can provide an important additional source of feedback from the field concerning the relevance, effectiveness, impact and sustainability of the activities of the United Nations system.

C. Recalling lessons learned

41. An evaluation database is being established on evaluation findings and lessons learned from past evaluations. This database is designed to cover both the evaluations of substantive programmes and technical co-operation activities. The evaluation database on technical co-operation activities will be linked up with the UNDP Evaluation Database through a co-operative arrangement. It will provide findings and lessons learned both in terms of policy areas (e.g. trade policies) and in terms of objectives (e.g. capacity building).

42. The database will be a component or data field of a joint JTCU/PCEU database on "country files" or "regional integration grouping files". Such "country files" will help to strengthen the "country focus" of UNCTAD's activities and also help the sharing of country policies and experiences derived from both research and operational activities. In this way, they will also facilitate the better integration of research and operational activities.

43. Lessons learned and evaluation indicators included in the database will be recalled and fed back into future activities, including the design and implementation of both substantive programmes and technical co-operation projects.

D. Improvement of the instruments of evaluation

44. Continued efforts will be made to improve the instruments of evaluation, including the methods of dissemination and feedback. In the latter regard, in addition to the readership survey, recourse may have to be had occassionally to other surveys involving the use, for example, of the Index of Economic Literature or the Social Science Citation Index. A database of the readership survey has also been established in order to facilitate easy recall of the replies received on particular studies or groups of studies in particular areas. An analysis of the results of the survey is made periodically for the information of top management and of programme managers.

45. Co-operative arrangements will need to be established or strengthened with the evaluation units of donors and agencies for the sharing of evaluation data (through the electronic linking of evaluation databases, where possible). Further, the PCEU will contribute to inter-agency efforts to enhance feedback, and to improve methodologies, including the specification of appropriate indicators, for the measurement of results in evaluation exercises, including the improved assessment of cost-effectiveness and of the requirements of sustainability.

Annex I

SUMMARY OF THE REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF THE TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION PROGRAMME IN THE FIELD OF MARITIME AND MULTIMODAL TRANSPORT (TD/B/C.4/331 and Add.1)

1. The report has been prepared pursuant to a request addressed by the Committee on Shipping in its resolution 61 (XIII) to the secretariat to "submit to the fourteenth session of the Committee a comprehensive evaluation of the technical assistance programme provided by UNCTAD in the field of shipping, ports and multimodal transport including an analysis of the costs and, if feasible, practical benefits of such a programme and an indication of the guidelines and priorities followed by UNCTAD in responding to a request for assistance and to report in a background document to the Committee on Shipping."

2. The report has been prepared by the Programme Co-ordination and Evaluation Unit, on its own responsibility, in co-operation with the Shipping Division and in consultation with the Joint Technical Co-operation Unit. It is based essentially on desk research and interviews held in Geneva, and on a number of external inputs, notably several UNDP-led in-depth evaluations of TRAINMAR and an in-depth evaluation of IPP by the Swedish International Development Authority (SIDA). The analysis of the projects implemented by the Shipping Division during the period 1980-1988 is summarized in the main report as well as in an annex.

Conclusions

3. The general conclusions are:

(i) The total value of the 81 projects implemented during the period 1980-1988 amounted to $24,759,000, accounting for about 24 per cent of the overall technical co-operation programme of UNCTAD for the period;

(ii) The most important component of the maritime and multimodal transport programme during the period has been the training projects, accounting for 52 per cent of the total programme. The non-training activities included: ports (20 per cent); shipping (8 per cent); and others covering multimodal transport, maritime legislation and multisectoral projects (20 per cent);

(iii) Ports activities, including the Improving Port Performance (IPP) training programme, constituted the highest proportion (30 per cent) after TRAINMAR (40 per cent); if it is assumed that half of the TRAINMAR resources used was ports-related, a fair assumption, ports activities alone (both training and other activities) would account for about 50 per cent of the total programme;

(iv) The other activities inclusive of training included shipping (9 per cent) and others, covering multimodal transport, maritime legislation and multisectoral aspects (21 per cent);

(v) The main outputs up to 1988 include: the establishment or strengthening of training institutions by over 20 developing countries, joined by a number of regional or subregional networks, co-ordinated interregionally by UNCTAD, which have successfully promoted exchanges of experiences and training materials and instructors as a form of TCDC; the creation of training capabilities in developing countries in terms of the training of 235 course developers and 460 instructors; the training of nearly 14,000 shipping and ports managers and other transport executives from developing countries at different levels of management in a wide range of subjects; the development, both centrally and locally, of 34 validated courses, together with 70 adaptations, for the training of shipping and port managers and other transport executives; the development of a computer simulation game for shipping decision-making (STRATSHIP) and of software programmes for aiding multimodal transport operations (MULTISHIP); and the successful application of techniques, procedures, systems, equipment and technologies, including information technology, and of various institutional innovations and arrangements in a wide range of developing countries;

(vi) Some of the TRAINMAR centres and networks show promise of sustainability and, since courses are available, can continue to generate outputs of trained personnel without external support. However, a further period of continued international support will still

be necessary, together with national support, in order to consolidate these and other centres and networks towards the objective of technical and financial self-sufficiency;

(vii) Substantial results have thus been achieved, although it is difficult to quantify the benefits, e.g. of a corps of trained course developers and instructors or of the training institutions themselves which can generate long-term mutliplier effects; further, the programme has tackled a wide variety of problems in an effective manner;

(viii) The innovative approach will continue to be needed in the future, with the advent of new technology and other developments and the evolution to more integrated systems of transport and distribution. However, training is likely to remain an important component as individual programmes or as part of project activities, even if international support for certain activities may progressively decline as the established training institutions move towards self-sustainability.

Recommendations

4. The recommendations of the study are as follows:

(i) Action on a recommendation to discontinue the SHIPASSIST Directory;

(ii) Granting of the right status to training institutions and adequate incentives to training personnel in order to help ensure stability and sustainability of training institutions and training capability;

(iii) Commitment of local support for project implementation and follow-up in order to help ensure the success of the project and the sustainability of its results;

(iv) Implementation of the action plan for TRAINMAR and the recommendations arising from the IPP evaluation; further co-ordination of TRAINMAR and IPP in order to enhance their complementarities; organization of a major fund raising effort in order to consolidate the training programme towar5ds self-sustainable development with minimum international support; contribution to the formulation of human resources development policies, taking account of future needs and orientations; updating of the assessment of the training needs in the field of maritime and multimodal transport;

(v) Expansion and diversification to the fullest extent possible of the sources of external expertise from the use of external consultants;

(vi) Ensuring that additional support costs arising from an expansion of technical co-operation activities are distributed to the fullest extent possible, consistent with the requirements of the central support function, maong the Divisions and Programmes which have generated the increase and which sustain their technical co-operation programmes;

(vii) Use of the guidelines, as appropriate, for the choice of project;

(viii) Specification and monitoring of project performance indicators as part of good project design and effective project implementation and follow-up; early establishment of the project monitoring system;

(ix) Extension of the innovations in the areas of dissemination and feedback not only within the Division but also to other parts of the secretariat;

(x) Working with IMO and ILO, as well as with other bodies, towards the strengthening of inter-agency co-operation.

Annex II

. SUMMARY OF THE REPORT ON THE EVALUATION OF TECHNICAL CO-OPERATION ACTIVITIES RELATING TO THE GENERAL SYSTEM OF PREFERENCES AND OTHER TRADE LAWS (TD/B/C.5/136)

1. The report has been prepared pursuant to decision 9 (XVI) of the Special Committee on Preferences. In that decision, the Special Committee decided that, in order to improve further the quality of the technical activities in the area of the GSP, the secretariat should undertake an evaluation of the effectiveness of such activities and report to the Special Committee at its eighteenth session.

2. The report has been prepared by the Programme Co-ordination and Evaluation Unit, on its own responsibility, in co-operation with the GSP Unit of the International Trade Programmes and in consultation with the Joint Technical Co-operation Unit. The evaluation focuses essentially on the technical co-operation activities relating to the GSP and other trade laws undertaken during the period 1985-1990. It is based on an analysis of project documents; the report of a UNDP-led evaluation of the African regional project completed in 1990; the various project performance evaluation reports and the reports of the various tripartite reviews; the numerous reports on the regional and national activities held during the period; the statements by both preference-giving and preference-receiving countries on such activities made at different sessions of the Special Committee; and attendance at a number of seminars. It also draws on the results of a UNDP-led thematic evaluation of activities covering the period 1972-1984 (completed in 1986) and thus provides a certain continuity from the earlier period until 1990.

Major findings and conclusions for the period 1985-1990

3. The major findings and conclusions are:

(i) There is wide and general agreement among preference-giving and preference-receiving countries regarding the practical value and necessity of the programme of technical co-operation activities relating to the GSP and other trade laws as an important means to help the latter make more effective use of the GSP and increase and diversify their non-traditional exports;

(ii) The total resources for the programme over the six-year period amounted to almost $4.5 million (as compared with $4.25 million over the 1972-1984 period); the contributions both in cash and in kind provided to the programme by preference-giving countries, a clear indication of the programme's popularity among them, accounted for 59 per cent of the total (up from 35 per cent of the total during the period 1972-1984), those provided by preference-receiving countries accounted for nearly 2 per cent, the remaining 39 per cent being provided by UNDP;

(iii) The substantial bilateral contributions, together with UNDP inputs, enabled a high rate of programme delivery to be achieved during the 1985-1990 period: 25 regional seminars for a total of 568 participants, 86 national seminars or workshops for a total of 5,847 participants, and 28 advisory missions, as well as a large number of information aids;

(iv) The interaction of the programme's technical co-operation activities with the research activities of the secretariat has produced a positive feedback to both types of activities;

(v) Several more advanced developing countries have achieved self-reliance in the field;

(vi) A national project for Indonesia relating to the GSP has been acknowledged to be cost-effective; further, several African countries have decided to implement their own national projects (Nigeria, Zimbabwe) or to undertake national activities in the context of a World Bank project (Guinea);

(vii) The programme's activities have contributed to the improvement of knowledge, skills and institutional capacity for the effective use and administration of the GSP; while it is difficult to establish a direct or causal link between such improvements and increased GSP exports, experts from preference-giving countries have acknowledged that there is evidence of the programme's activities leading to increased GSP exports; further, the overall utilization of the three major GSP schemes (EEC, Japan, United States) by the Asia and Pacific region, which has benefited, in addition to the activities of the interregional project, from a regional project dating back to 1979, has been higher than that of the other two developing regions;

(viii) A number of shortcomings have been observed, including insufficient adaptation of the activities of the programme to the particular requirements and situation of the countries of the African region; uneven progress achieved in the strengthening of GSP national focal points; inadequate specification of quantifiable progress or achievement indicators in some of the project documents; reduced effectiveness of particular events or activities due to different factors; insufficient development of "second or third generation" activities which are better adapted to the evolving and various needs of different categories of preference-receiving countries; and limited success achieved with regard to technical co-operation among developing countries.

Recommendations

4. The major recommendations include:

(i) Maintaining the specificity of the GSP focus, together with the consideration of other trade laws and regulations affecting GSP exports, as well as any other market access issues, and the addition to the course material, according to the needs of target audiences, of other appropriate "modules" dealing with, inter alia, the identification of non-traditional product lines relative to the coverage of the GSP in which investments may be profitable and the industrial options to be considered (in co-operation with UNIDO); the formulation of policy for trade development and export promotion, including the development of appropriate export services (in co-operation with ITC); the comparative rates of preferences for particular product lines under different preferential arrangements; the strengthening of national institutional capacity for the collection and dissemination of information on the GSP and the training of officials; and the possibilities of using GSP cumulation on a regional or subregional basis;

(ii) Early establishment of a computerized consolidated information system on the GSP; with the help of appropriate equipment, computer-aided video presentations and projections of, for example, the features of particular schemes or of comparative preferential margins for particular products may be made, and computer printouts of such information distributed to participants at seminars and workshops;

(iii) Concentration on national level activities (national seminars or workshops and advisory missions) which can be tailor-made to the particular needs of individual countries, and the adoption of various measures in order to enhance the quality of such activities;

(iv) Convening of interregional seminars to consider major policy issues, as and when necessary, immediately prior to sessions of the Special Committee;

(v) Organization of subregional seminars for particular groupings of developing countries (integration groupings, clusters of least developed countries, etc.) rather than regional seminars, as may be needed to complement national-level activities, in order to allow GSP administrators to exchange information on their experiences, address major issues of common concern, etc.;

(vi) Organization of appropriate advisory missions and the training of trainers for the strengthening of national focal points and their supporting infrastructure;

(vii) Inclusion of a "problems column" in the GSP Newsletter published by the Asian regional project; extending the publication of such newsletters to the other regions;

(viii) Establishment of a roster of GSP experts from the more advanced developing countries and a list of developing countries which offer on-the-job training for GSP administrators in order to facilitate technical co-operation among developing countries;

(ix) Provision of assistance to developing countries and preference-receiving countries in Eastern Europe for the development of their co-operation in terms of the utilization of the global cumulation rules of the GSP;

(x) Establishment of co-operation with UNIDO and ITC in the development and delivery of appropriate modules for GSP seminars or workshops; recommendation to the effect that ITC provide information on the GSP as a regular part of its export promotion activities at the country level;

(xi) Securing of adequate funding for the further development and delivery of the programme for the period 1992-1994, estimated at $750,000 per year if the present level of programme delivery is to be maintained.